

IN SENATE
OF
THE UNITED STATES,

FEBRUARY 26, 1818.

The Committee of Claims, to whom was referred the petition of William Hill, and others, inhabitants of the city of New York, and the town of Salem,

REPORT—

That the petitioners were holders of certain debentures, issued in their favor about eighteen years ago, by the proper officers of the customs at the ports where they reside. The claimants were paid under an act of the last session of Congress. Interest on the amount so paid is now claimed. The debentures were issued on the exportation of merchandise to New Orleans, then under the dominion of Spain. A law of the United States was at that time in force, disallowing the benefit of drawback on goods exported to the dominions of a foreign state immediately adjoining the United States. Some time after the enactment of said law, a Treasury circular was issued, requiring the proper officer to withhold the payment of debentures outstanding on exportations to the port aforesaid. Before this circular had been received, considerable sums had already been paid; for the remainder, payment was refused. In the session of '99—1800, an act passed making it lawful to ship goods to Orleans, with benefit of drawback thereafter. In 1801--2, the collector of New York petitioned Congress to acquit him, on the payments he had made, and for authority to pay the outstanding debentures; which was not granted. In 1803--4, an act was passed for the relief of Samuel Corp, who held upwards of \$15,000 of these claims. The collector of New York was relieved by Congress in 1814, so far as he had made payments contrary to law. From these facts, it appears that debentures were issued erroneously, and the payment of them, so far as Congress were concerned, was an act of liberality, optionally performed. The committee, in conformation of this opinion, refer to a letter from the Secretary of the Treasury herewith reported. That payment was so long withheld, appears to have arisen from the negligence of the claimants, as the person most deeply interested was relieved in 1803--4, which was such an indication of the liberal temper of Congress as could not have been overlooked. The committee believe, the relief already extended to the claimants, is all that can reasonably be afforded to them, and therefore respectfully submit the following resolution:

Resolved, That the prayer of the petitioners ought not to be granted.

